Sociology 9204A Aging, Work and Policy

September 2014 Tuesday 1:30-4:30 Room: SSC5427

Professor: Ingrid Arnet Connidis
Sociology SSC5329
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Office Hours: By appointment (see me after class, phone, or send an e-mail to arrange a meeting time).

Prerequisite(s): Graduate student in good standing.
**See end of course outline for regulations that you must know.
N.B. Reading assignments may change in response to student interest.

Course Description

Objectives and Organization of the Course

The objective of the course is to examine the interface between work and policy in an aging society such as Canada’s. Although older age is associated with retirement, retirement at the social and personal level is shaped by a cohort’s and an individual’s work history and life course. Using a multi-level framework and a critical life course perspective on work history and outcomes in later life, we will consider population and workforce aging, work history, work–life/family balance and its short- and long-term impact, unique circumstances of older workers, pensions, retirement, and the impact of socially structured relations (age, gender, class, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and ability) on all of these issues.

The recession or economic downturn has re-ignited some concerns about an aging population and its consequences. At the same time, the younger cohort of millennials, GenY or 20-somethings have been cast as “emerging” adults who have failed to meet the markers of adulthood set by previous cohorts. These current circumstances are a good example of age relations meeting intergenerational ties in families, population aging as a political and social issue, and the impact of economic conditions on social life.

The impact of policies across the life course, for example, child care, is felt by all age groups in both the short and long term. Although child care issues are usually considered relevant for parents in the labour force, they have consequences for later life stages in terms of the potential to accumulate resources for parents as well as for other generations in families.

Although the focus of the course will be the Canadian experience, considerations of where the Canadian experience fits globally and of how other countries’ experiences compare are also of interest.
Students are encouraged to consider how their particular interests relate to the issues to be discussed in the course and term papers may pursue topics that combine other issues with those central to the course.

I like to incorporate student interests in the reading list as long as they fit broadly (it is a broad topic) with the course themes. You will also have the opportunity to apply course materials to a topic of personal interest in your term paper.

**Course requirements**

One advantage of graduate-level seminars is small numbers and the ability for discussion that involves all participants. Classes will usually open with comments by the professor followed by focused discussion.

Involvement will be promoted through seminar presentations that are to provide critical summaries of selected readings. Details of seminar expectations will be discussed further in class. A written version of seminar presentations will be submitted on the day of the presentation. Further details will be distributed in the first class.

There will be a mid-term test consisting of essay questions. Students will receive the question/s one week prior to the test.

There will be a final 15-page term paper (250 words per page). Students will select a topic that is related to the course and approved by the professor. Readings and themes from the course must be incorporated as a central component of the paper. Students will submit a brief written proposal by October 21st (earlier is fine) that includes enough detail to permit assessment of its pertinence to the course and its practicability. **Students are responsible for being aware of all regulations pertaining to plagiarism.**

Class participation.......................................................... 10%

Seminar.............................................................. 25% (15% for oral presentation; 10% for written summary)

Mid-term Test.................................................30% (Nov. 4th)

Final Paper.......................................................... 35% (Dec. 8th by 4 p.m.)

** Only extreme and unforeseeable reasons will be accepted as grounds for being late for any assignments. The need for an extension must be noted **before** the due date of the assignment (seminar, test, term paper) and
documented through the appropriate channels.

**Course Readings**
*This is a tentative list to give you an idea of topics to be covered and readings to be assigned. We will discuss other possible topics related to students’ interests in the first class.*


*Will be available in the bookstore; on reserve at Weldon

Articles and chapters from a variety of sources (see course schedule below)

**Course Outline** *Bring your readings to class each week.

1. **September 9**  
   **Introduction**  
   Overview of course.  
   Multi-level analysis; A Critical Perspective;  
   A Life Course Approach; Ambivalence

2. **September 16**  
   **Core Issues & Theoretical Approaches**
   
   **Population and Workforce Aging: Crisis or Challenge?**
   
   

   **Theoretical Approaches: Introduction and Overview**
   
   


3. **September 23**  
   **Theoretical Approaches**

   **A Critical Perspective**


*A Life-Course Perspective*


5. October 7 Workforce Structure and Older Workers


6. *Must Reschedule*

October 14 Workforce Structure and Older Workers cont’d


7. October 21 Gender and Work; Balancing Paid and Unpaid Work

Other structured social relations could be incorporated here; e.g., ability, sexual orientation.


8. October 28 Paid/unpaid work; Work/life balance


*Review
Receive test question/s

9. November 4 Midterm Test worth 30%

10. November 11 Pensions and Related Policy for Older Workers

University Press.


http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy2.lib.uwo.ca/journals/canadian_journal_on_aging/v025/25.4cooke.html

Current issues re. the Canada Pension Plan

11. November 18 Retirement and Related Policy; Work, Aging and Social Policy

http://journals1.scholarsportal.info.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/tmp/17816991789051229737.pdf


http://www.cprn.org/documents/11849_en.PDF


12. November 25 Age Relations, Intergenerational Ties and Future Prospects


**Paper due by noon. December 8.

Have a happy and safe break!

**Statement on Academic Offences**
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:
Graduate

http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/graduate_regulations/section_10.htm

“All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).”

**Completion of graduate course requirements** Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered (Fall: December 31; Winter: April 30, Summer: August 31). Only in exceptional circumstances, and with permission, may a student take additional time to complete the course requirements. More details are outlined in the Graduate Handbook:

http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/course_information.html